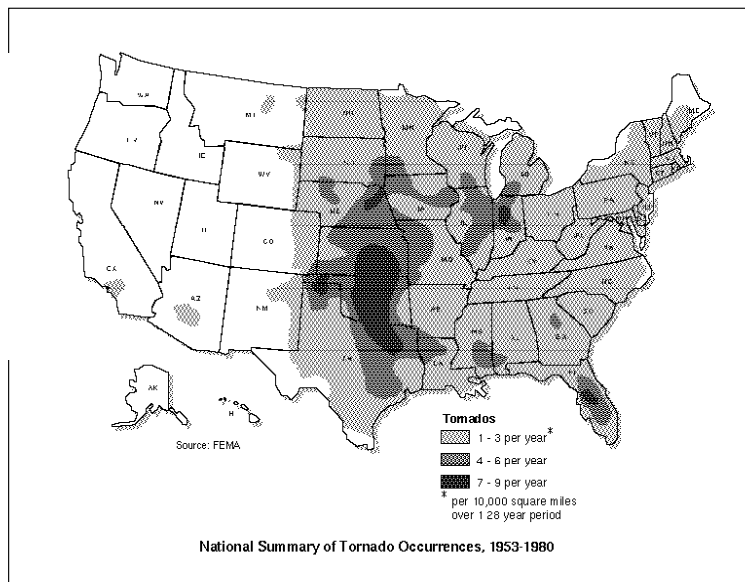


BACKGROUND

TORNADOES

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

1. The best protection during a tornado is in an interior room on the lowest level of a building, preferably a basement or storm cellar.
2. Tornadoes strike with incredible velocity. Wind speeds may approach 300 miles per hour. These winds can uproot trees and structures and turn harmless objects into deadly missiles, all in a matter of seconds. Mobile homes are particularly vulnerable to tornadoes.
3. Injuries or deaths related to tornadoes most often occur when buildings collapse, people are hit by flying objects or are caught trying to escape the tornado in a car.
4. Tornadoes are most destructive when they touch ground. Normally a tornado will stay on the ground for no more than 20 minutes; however, one tornado can touch ground several times in different areas.



Tornadoes can occur in any state but are more frequent in the Midwest, Southeast, and Southwest. The states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Texas are at greatest risk.

WHAT IS A TORNADO?

A tornado is a violent windstorm characterized by a twisting, funnel-shaped cloud. It is spawned by a thunderstorm (or sometimes as a result of a hurricane) and produced when cool air overrides a layer of warm air, forcing the warm air to rise rapidly. The damage from a tornado is a result of the high wind velocity and wind-blown debris. Tornado season is generally March through August, although tornadoes can occur at any time of year. They tend to occur in the afternoons and evenings: over 80 percent of all tornadoes strike between noon and midnight.

HELP YOUR COMMUNITY GET READY

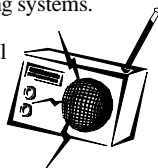
The media can raise awareness about tornadoes by providing important information to the community. Here are some suggestions:



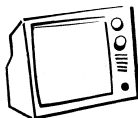
1. Publish a special section in your local newspaper with emergency information about tornadoes. Localize the information by printing the phone numbers of local emergency services offices, the American Red Cross, and hospitals.

2. Periodically inform your community of local public warning systems.

3. Sponsor a "Helping Your Neighbors" program at your local schools to encourage children to think of those persons who require special assistance such as elderly people, infants, or people with disabilities.



4. Conduct a series on how to protect yourself during a tornado in case you are at home, in a car, at the office, or outside.



5. Interview local officials about what people living in mobile home parks should do if a tornado warning is issued.

DID YOU KNOW...

■ Tornadoes can be nearly invisible, marked only by swirling debris at the base of the funnel. Some are composed almost entirely of windblown dust and still others are composed of several mini-funnels.

■ On average, the United States experiences 100,000 thunderstorms each year. Approximately 1,000 tornadoes develop from these storms.

■ Although tornadoes do occur throughout the world, the United States experiences the most intense and devastating tornadoes.

■ Tornadoes produce the most violent winds on earth. Tornado winds can approach speeds as high as 300 miles per hour, travel distances over 100 miles and reach heights over 60,000 feet above ground.

■ In November 1988, 121 tornadoes struck 15 south central states, resulting in 14 lives lost and damages reaching \$108 million.

■ According to the National Weather Service, about 42 people are killed because of tornadoes each year.

HOW THE PUBLIC CAN HELP AFTER A DISASTER

When disaster strikes, people everywhere want to help those in need. To ensure that this compassion and generosity are put to good use, the media can highlight these facts:

► Financial aid is an immediate need of disaster victims. Financial contributions should be made through a recognized voluntary organization to help ensure that contributions are put to their intended use.

► Before donating food or clothing, wait for instructions from local officials. Immediately after a disaster, relief workers usually don't have the time or facilities to setup distribution channels, and too often these items go to waste.

► Volunteers should go through a recognized voluntary agency such as the American Red Cross or Salvation Army. They know what is needed and are prepared to deal with the need. Local emergency services officials also coordinate volunteer efforts for helping in disasters.

► Organizations and community groups wishing to donate items should first contact local officials, the American Red Cross, or Salvation Army to find out what is needed and where to send it. Be prepared to deliver the items to one place, tell officials when you'll be there, and provide for transportation, driver, and unloading.